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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes issues discussed at an invitational meeting on family day care associations sponsored by the Southern Regional Education Board. Participants in the meeting included the presidents of six family day care associations from Tennessee, Georgia, Florida and Alabama. Also included were representatives from the Children's Foundation, an organization concerned with the provision of food programs for children, and from Texas Child Care '76, a child advocacy organization attempting to foster the development of family day care in Texas. The report focuses on the role of family day care associations, professional organizations of family day care providers. Included in the report are descriptions of the development of the six associations represented at the meeting. Activities of the associations are described and problems and issues facing family day care providers are discussed. Also included is a discussion of issues involved in the purchasing of family day care services by State agencies. The final section of the report presents ideas for fostering the development and maintenance of family day care associations. (BD)

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FAMILY DAY CARE ASSOCIATIONS IN THE SOUTH

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TRAINING FOR CHILD CARE PROJECT

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PREFACE

The Southern Regional Education Board* through its Commission on Mental Health and Human Services first became involved with day care when it coordinated and evaluated the Southeastern Day Care Project from 1970-1973. The purpose of that project was to conduct demonstration programs in each of the eight states in HEW Region IV that provided the state agencies with experience in delivering day care services. The primary focus was on day care centers, but in some of the states it also included family day care. Family day care was found to be a very positive option--both in expanding the scope of delivery systems and in meeting the needs of families and children.

During the project period, there were two invitational meetings on family day care which produced several short publications reporting some of the findings.

In 1976, the Southern Regional Education Board was funded by the Carnegie Corporation for a project to improve training for child care in the South in three content areas. One of these was training for family day care. In 1977, an additional grant from the Levi Strauss Company greatly increased the staff's capability to work in the area of family day care.

It has been the policy to report experiences and insights as the project went along--rather than waiting to include them in a final publication. This paper is one of a series of informal publications that will be distributed to those who are interested in the development and improvement of family day care. They are made possible by the grant from the Levi Strauss Foundation.

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* SREB is an interstate compact devoted primarily to improving education in the 14 Southern states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia.

INTRODUCTION

Family day care is a type of child care arrangement in which up to six* children are cared for in the home of the caregiver. Preschool children of the caregiver are counted in the number of children being served. It is the form of day care arrangement that many families have used in the past, but until recently, it has received little attention from public agencies or from the day care profession who have generally seen it as a second choice to be used when a day care center was not available.

Currently, family day care is receiving increased awareness and appreciation as social policy experts recognize that parents often prefer family day care to other forms of child care and that various options should be available.

States are reviewing their licensing laws and licensing practice to insure protection to children in family day care as well as in day care centers. Training materials for family day care are being developed, and training workshops are being conducted in several states.

There is evidence that the states are increasing the amount of family day care they are purchasing and that they are using it not only for the care of children of working parents but also for children with special needs and for protective service cases.

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* The maximum number varies from state to state and is usually determined by the licensing law.

Even more important, the people who offer this service, family day care providers, are feeling the need to gain recognition and professional status and are working at this through the formation of family day care associations. In order to begin a family day care project, it seemed important to know directly from providers what they perceive their problems to be, what supports they believe would help, and generally, what the "state of the art" really is. Presidents of family day care associations in the SREB states were asked to come to Atlanta because they could report their own experiences as well as those of many other family day care providers. This would offer a broad perspective while still keeping the group small and informal.

A second purpose for bringing together family day care associations' presidents in the South is that such associations in other parts of the country are proving to be effective in improving both the image and the reality of family day care. There are now a number of such associations in the Southern states, and the time seemed right to encourage these associations to come together to share experiences and to learn more about the self-help potential that such associations have for their members.

Presidents of six family day care associations were contacted and invited to a two-day meeting on July 26-27, 1977, in Atlanta. The participants were from Tennessee, Georgia, Florida and Alabama.

In addition to the family day care providers, representatives from the Children's Foundation and Texas Child Care '76 were included. The Children's Foundation in Washington, D.C., is a food advocacy organization which is working to organize family day care under umbrella agencies so that they can be eligible

for the USDA Child Care Food Program. Texas Child Care '76 is a child advocacy organization based in Texas, which has been fostering the development of family day care in that state.

This publication summarizes the participants' observations concerning problems of family day care providers which can be improved through forming an association, and it looks at some of the actions necessary to start and maintain an association. It is a report on current issues in family day care as seen by providers and can serve as a guide to those who seek to establish a family day care association.

HISTORY OF THE FAMILY DAY CARE ASSOCIATIONS

The associations represented differed greatly in size, in purpose, and in their degree of autonomy but there appeared to be common factors in the motivation to organize and in many of the goals and activities.

For four of the associations, the licensing agency which had begun to provide training and other services to family day care operators first brought providers into contact with each other. Being a family day care provider is a lonely business; thus interaction with peers met a real need. The providers continued their contacts by phone; information regarding how to handle problems with children, how to manage time and activities for children was exchanged.

One of the associations grew out of a project funded to expand and improve day care services in a group of rural Appalachian counties. The other association was formed with assistance from a local group interested in getting the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Care Food Program in day care homes to improve the nutrition of the children.

In the case of the four systems that initially were brought together by licensing staff, there was also some kind of a crisis or problem that actually mobilized the informal groups to incorporate and become autonomous organizations. These crisis situations resulted from such problems as the need for group insurance coverage, restrictive zoning regulations, or slow reimbursement procedures where services were being purchased by the state.

The fact that the USDA lunch reimbursement program is available only through umbrella agencies or associations has been another strong incentive to organize.

Despite the differences in size and background, the forms of service provided and the activities of these associations have been similar. Rather than an in-depth analysis of each association, this report discusses the common services and activities from the combined experience and then summarizes the individual association programs in the Appendix.

ACTIVITIES OF FAMILY DAY CARE ASSOCIATIONS

GAINING RECOGNITION AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE PROFESSION

All of the associations found that in addition to solving their specific problems, there was a need for public education to interpret family day care to parents, to human service agencies, and to the community at large. To change the public's perception of family day care from "babysitting" to a "professional child caring program" became a major goal of the associations. They also found that they needed to reach other family day care home providers and bring them into the associations.

Some of the associations made effective use of the media. A number of them had arranged with local newspapers for articles with pictures. In fact, one of the participants said that she had always felt she did not want to do babysitting in her home but when a newspaper article presented family day care as a professional child care program, she became interested and has now become actively involved in the association as well as an effective day care provider.

One of the programs has "Share-shops" where family day care providers come together to exchange program ideas and to discuss common problems. While many of the services of the association are open only to members, invitations to participate in the Share-shops are extended to all family day care providers in the community. Some of these Share-shops have been filmed and shown by the local television station. A follow-up film of an individual day care mother working in her home is planned.

One of the associations has printed stationery and membership cards using a logo designed by one of its members. In one of the associations, a dinner was held honoring all of the providers who had been licensed for a period of five years. In another area, a dinner was held by the family day care providers honoring their husbands. These men not only supported their spouses in their daily work with children but also did things like building play equipment, putting up fences, and helping remodel a storefront office.

COMMUNICATION AMONG MEMBERS

Several associations have used newsletters as a major tool to communicate ideas to each other about program activities, menus and supplies. Newsletters report fund-raising activities and notify members about meetings or training events. They also provide communication to support groups and community agencies. More than any other tool, newsletters alleviate the sense of isolation that is one of the real problems of operating a small private enterprise.

OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOP SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

One of the major activities of the associations represented was training both in child development and business management. Topics that have been presented in training sessions include toy making, art activities, use of songs and games, use of outdoor space, language activities, management of discipline, planning for health and safety, first aid, child nutrition, menu planning, food preparation, bookkeeping, record keeping, and understanding taxes.

To develop these training programs, family day care associations have relied on many community institutions, such as licensing departments, vocational and technical schools, a local university, the Red Cross, the National Dairy Council and staff of sponsoring agencies.

At the same time the associations have organized self-taught learning opportunities. The association which has monthly "Share-shops" has chosen this name because it indicates that each participant is of value and has something to share. Family day care providers are people who already have an expertise in communicating with others, although they may lack formal education. One family day care association is working with a local university to provide college credits for the training sessions it sponsors. Another group encourages its members to attend training sessions sponsored by agencies such as the licensing agency, the local Association on Children Under Six, and the Family Counseling Center. When a member attends a statewide professional meeting, he or she writes up what was learned for the association's newsletter.

TOY LENDING PROGRAMS

Having the right toys and equipment available to meet the needs of children of various ages and stages of development can prove expensive and requires both time and special expertise. Several associations have developed or cooperate with toy lending libraries to solve this problem. In one community, the Licensing Board started such a service but works with the association in its management. The association itself has received a donation from the Junior League toward the purchase of a van to deliver materials. In another city, a toy lending library was started with a $100 donation from the State Department of Human Services and is run by the association. The group is currently seeking funds to expand the library. Another association is able to loan its members large pieces of equipment such as fences and sand boxes. This is made possible by a grant to the sponsoring organization, the local area Planning and Development Council.

MAINTAINING FULL ENROLLMENT

Matching the right child with the right family day care mother and insuring that each family day care home maintains full capacity is a universal concern in family day care. Several groups have attempted to address this concern through an information and referral service. In one city there is a community information and referral service which relays requests for child care information to the family day care association, which in turn contacts the prospective parent(s), learns more about their particular needs, and supplies them with information about family day care providers in their area who have vacancies. The association considers this an important incentive in membership recruitment since it will supply information only about its own members. In another community, a referral service has been a long-standing activity of the Licensing Board. The referral service provides information about centers and family day care homes to inquiring parents. It is expected that the association will take on some of the responsibility for running the referral service and for developing criteria to help the families in making a choice.

PROVIDING AND PAYING FOR MEALS

A great deal of time, thought, and money of family day care providers and their associations are devoted to the proper feeding of the children in their care. Through associations, tips are exchanged regarding food preparation and service including what kinds of foods can be prepared the night before, how to serve meals suitable to infants and toddlers and older children--and how to accommodate special dietary habits or allergies.

A most important development for the nutrition programs is that family day care is now eligible to participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child

Care Food Program. A family day care home can receive reimbursement for meal costs provided it serves eligible children and provided it makes application through a sponsoring organization, which must be a tax-exempt corporation. This change in law occurred in 1975. For children, it provides nutritious meals based on USDA guidelines. For caregivers, it increases the money available to run the program by underwriting part of the cost of meals. For sponsoring agencies, it allows some administrative reimbursement to cover the costs of record keeping, monitoring, and providing nutrition training for family day care operators.

The availability of USDA food monies has been an important motivation in the development of several day care associations. One association has incorporated and become the sponsoring agency for its members. So far, 85 operators have become eligible and the association anticipates recruiting an additional 100 caregivers as a result of this benefit. This association and another association in the state received help in developing their USDA programs through MANNA, a food advocacy coalition. When it was discovered that the sponsoring organizations must be incorporated and tax exempt, MANNA offered to play the sponsor role until the associations could comply with these requirements, thus helping to avoid a delay of several months.

In another city, the state Center for Higher Education first became interested in organizing a family day care association so that family day care providers would be able to participate in the USDA program. As a result of two public meetings, 70 homes have signed up and potential association leaders have been identified.

The Children's Foundation has taken on the task of making information regarding the eligibility of family day care for the USDA child care food program available throughout the country. At this point, more operators need to be informed of their eligibility and more sponsoring organizations need to be identified. The National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Act will be up for renewal in 1978. Associations and individuals who want to work for the renewal of that legislation should be organizing now. They should also work to help family day care operators become eligible so that there is documented evidence that family day care providers want and will use the child care food program.

INSURANCE AND TAXES

Two major topics addressed by family day care associations are insurance and taxes. Problems with insurance are common. One caregiver association served as the sponsoring organization for a group insurance policy which covered both medical and personal liability. However, the carrier abruptly decided not to renew the policy despite the fact that there has been only one claim so far. The association has had great difficulty in locating another insurance company. Another association located an insurance agency which agreed to accept a group plan if the association could get 25 members the first year and 100 members the second year. The association was not successful in getting 100 members the second year but the policy was nevertheless renewed at a rate which was better than individual coverage rates. An association can be quite effective in negotiating group insurance rates that are substantially lower than individual rates. For example, one association sponsors a policy which allows operators to buy medical liability insurance for individual children at a cost of only $2 per child per year.

In general, the family day care operators know little about the types of insurance they need, and they find it both difficult and expensive to purchase the right insurance. An ordinary homeowner's policy may not be enough to cover the liability involved in operating a business in your home. Providers should check with their carriers on this question.

Insurance companies are likely to raise hypothetical questions about accidents that might possibly occur in family day care home settings. Family day care associations and agencies should keep records of accidents so that more effective health and safety measures can be provided and so that insurance companies can be given statistics regarding the actual risks involved in covering family day care settings.

The Tax Reform Act of 1976 created a major problem for family day care when it required that deductions for business use of a home can be taken for only that part of the home which is used exclusively for business. In most family day care homes, both the operator's own family and the day care children use the entire house. Fortunately an amendment has been passed (PL95-30) which exempts family day care from this "exclusive use" requirement. Several of the associations worked with their members to organize letter-writing campaigns on behalf of this amendment and a number of providers testified before Congressional committees. It was primarily the organizational leadership of family day care associations which convinced Congress to change this policy.

Beginning with the 1977 tax year, only family day care homes which have applied for or been granted a "license, certification, registration or approval under provisions of any applicable state law" will be entitled to the deduction.

There is a need to communicate this information quickly so that non-licensed operators can determine how to prepare for the next tax year.

LICENSING AND RECULATION

Along with the growing public use of family day care in the South, there has been growing attention to issues of regulation. A persistent problem is how to insure protection of children without decreasing the supply of caregivers or substantially altering the family-like atmosphere which most parents seek in their family day care arrangements. Thus the area of licensing and registration is of particular interest to family day care associations.

Most states have included family day care in some form in their licensing law. But there is considerable variation in what constitutes family day care and what forms of child care arrangements should be regulated by the public. Some states (or localities) require a license if only one unrelated child is being cared for. Others do not attempt to regulate unless there are four, five or six children not related to the caregiver in a given home. In some instances, states have made an administrative decision not to enforce licensing or to limit enforcement only to cases in which a complaint is lodged or when an operator specifically requests licensing. Often a lack of licensing staff has necessitated this decision. On the other hand in states where aggressive efforts are being made to enforce licensing, other kinds of problems arise. Because of the limited experience many health, safety and human service regulatory agencies have had with family day care, very few standards have been developed for family day care homes. The use of standards designed for public buildings, restaurants, nursing homes or even day care centers are often inappropriate for the combination

of personal residence and family programming arrangements which are the essence of family day care.

As a consequence of all these factors, most family day care is not licensed. There is an honest concern that attempts to expand the definition of family day care in the laws of the states or to step up enforcement will decrease the number of available operations, force some operators to go underground or alter the most desired qualities of the system.

Despite all these problems, there was a feeling that there will be an increase in the number of homes involved in some form of registration or licensing in the next few years. As more people argue that family day care is a profession for which support and training opportunities should be available and that family day care should be purchased with public funds, there will be a growing demand that operators be willing to submit to some process of accountability with minimum standard setting.

Two recent legal requirements will probably contribute to this movement. The change in income tax law has already been mentioned. In addition, the USDA Child Care Food Program requires that a home either be licensed or approved--or have applied for licensing. These laws will exert a powerful economic incentive for family day caregivers to request licensing. In fact, there is speculation that some states will be caught unprepared for the increased demand for licenses which the tax law and food program may trigger. Another possibility is that requests will be made to broaden some licensing laws so that more operators are included.

Other developments have signaled increasing concern for the regulation of family day care in Southern states. For example, Tennessee, which has been active in licensing this form of child care for several years, has now developed a set of "enrichment standards" exclusively for family day care. Enrichment standards are standards designed to reward programs that operate above the minimum level required for basic licensure. Operators are voluntarily encouraged to reach these new levels.

Probably the most significant development in regulatory administration is the experimentation with registration of family day care homes that is occurring in Texas and Virginia as well as in other parts of the country. Registration is an alternative form of licensure or regulation. Several different models of the registration processes have been developed in different areas. Generally the process includes the establishment of a set of standards by the licensing agency. The caregiver then does a self-study to see whether she meets the standards. She obtains other needed health and safety inspection certificates and notifies the licensing agency that in her judgment she meets the standards. The caregiver is then considered registered. Usually the licensing agency retains the right of inspection but this is exercised only on a random sample of homes or when a complaint is lodged. In the Texas model, a copy of the standards is supplied to each parent and they receive a form which explains how to lodge a complaint. The registration approach to licensing differs considerably from the traditional model and is considered experimental in those states currently trying it. In Texas, over 4700 homes have been registered since the program began in 1976. Proponents of registration hope that it offers the right combination both to encourage homes to be part of a regulatory and self-improving

process and to maintain the special desirable qualities that parents recognize in the currently largely unregulated system. Almost all interested parties recognize that mandated registration is still in an experimental stage and that it requires further thoughtful and objective review. When Texas began its experiment, an evaluation plan was included. The results of that evaluation will be available in October, 1977, after which the state will host a meeting to report on its results and to hear about the experiments taking place in other states. Participants from the family day care associations felt that this report on registration experiments will be most useful in helping to clarify the issues of regulation of family day care.

The providers in one association are faced with a problem which is fairly unique but which has implications for family day care in general. In their home city, a zoning ordinance was passed in 1975 which states that a family day care operator can care for no more than four children including her own. The zoning ordinance conflicts with the state licensing law which describes family day care as the care of five, six or seven children including the operator's own children under 14.

Because of the conflict of the two laws, none of the family day care homes in this city are licensed by the state. Technically, this prevents the state licensing agency from providing free consultation and training to these providers. A more serious consequence is the financial impact it has on providers. Depending on the child's age, the state licensing law would allow an operator to care for up to three more children than the city zoning regulation. Using the staff/child ratio of the Federal Interagency Day Care Requirements, the state could purchase care for up to five children instead of the four allowed

by the zoning rule. Thus, under the zoning restriction, the operator is able to take in less money because she is prevented from caring for the maximum number of children established by both state and federal standards.

It is important to note that this group of family day care operators was not aware of this new ordinance until it had gone into effect and efforts to change it have been unsuccessful so far. The experience of being caught unaware has made the association feel that one of its primary purposes is to represent the interest of providers. This means being aware of what is happening that affects their interests at all levels of government and being willing to take political action.

USE OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Another area addressed by family day care associations is the use of community resources. Most day care programs, whether they are family day care homes or day care centers, need and depend on several community resources. Some community services, such as those of libraries, health departments and parks, are available regardless of the sponsorship of the program. Independent family day care providers and private-for-profit day care centers, because of their entrepreneurial nature, often have less access to the full range of other community support programs than a voluntary or publicly sponsored program might have. However, when family day care homes become a part of an agency or association, they take on a different image in the community; more resources of the community then become available.

The association representatives at this meeting have done a good job of tapping the community for assistance. The following actions were reported:

A dental hygienist comes to the homes in one association, checks teeth and talks about dental care to staff and the children. The Junior League in another community donated $1500 toward a toy van. A church in another community makes a room available for the Toyland resources (toy lending library) and for training. A child development intern from a local college provided staffing assistance to one association in its formative period. A church's young people's group in another city used scrap material to make toys for the day care homes. Volunteer groups have contributed time to toy lending libraries, to visit homes with training information and to operate an information booth at a statewide professional association meeting.

USING PAID ASSISTANTS AND VOLUNTEERS

The family day care associations have a general interest in questions of recruiting, training and using volunteers or paid assistants. Some associations include members who operate group homes, that is, they serve between 7 to 13 children in a family residence. In a group home, an additional staff person is required because of Federal Interagency Day Care Requirements or individual state licensing policies. Some group home operators have been able to secure assistants paid by such manpower programs as the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act or public assistance programs for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) recipients. There is an obvious financial value to such an arrangement since the assistant is paid by the public agency; however, there are also problems. The assistant usually is not trained in child care even though this is supposed to be the case; in addition some of these employees are simply not motivated to work. Upon recognizing this problem, one provider decided to require her assistant to attend the association sponsored training sessions.

In family day care homes there was also a feeling that an assistant on an occasional basis would be helpful so that the provider could attend training, participate in health screening or social service conferences related to children in her care, or even to pursue personal business. Two of the associations reported that community volunteers were available to play this role. In both cases the licensing agency had helped establish the volunteer program.

STATE POLICIES RELATED TO PURCHASING FAMILY DAY CARE

One of the big steps forward in the recognition of family day care in the Southern region is the fact that several states and local governments are expanding their efforts to purchase family day care. Prior to this time, most states have used their funds to purchase center care only. Now a number of states are recognizing that family day care should be purchased for children of working parents, for children involved in special treatment programs and for children in need of child protection. However, the budding enthusiasm for family day care has led to some growing pains. It is ironic but also understandable that states which were most active in developing purchase programs have experienced some of the most difficult problems. The participants wanted discussion of these problems to be tempered with an appreciation for the leadership which these states are providing for family day care.

SPEEDING UP REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURES

One state which makes extensive purchases of family day care has been under criticism because of the long delay between the time an operator serves a child and the time she receives payment for the service. Delays of two months or more have been common although recent developments will probably change this. While day care centers have become used to the "cash flow" problems involved in receiving public funds, these delays pose a much greater problem for the single family day care operator whose creditors are the same merchants with whom she does her family shopping. Two of the operators present at this meeting have

received lower credit ratings since they became involved with the delayed payment problem.

The late reimbursement problem has been one of the issues which has crystallized the development of family day care associations in that state. One association made direct contact with the governor and received a promise that reimbursement would be made at least by the 25th of each succeeding month and that the association would be notified any time payment would be later than that. Another local association has a special subcommittee called the Prompt Pay Committee which maintains an ongoing concern for the subject. They have been offered the service of a lawyer to represent their concern if it should become necessary to take court action for their cause.

Obviously, this disagreement between the family day providers and the public agency is not desirable and needs to be remedied soon. In the meantime, some operators have stopped serving state subsidized children. This is unfortunate since the care taken to recruit and train caregivers to serve children with special problems is lost as a result of the slowness of the bureaucratic process.

CLARIFYING THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE FAMILY DAY PROVIDER

Legally, most family day care providers are self-employed whether they serve publicly subsidized children or private fee-paying families. Because of this, an operator has considerable autonomy in the way she runs her business. However, when she serves children who are partly the responsibility of a public agency, some thought must be given to how independent the operator can remain.

Public agencies occasionally have urgent need to place a child in family day care for a limited period of time. An agency often cannot predict when it

will identify a case of child abuse in which the child should be placed in family day care nor can they be sure just when they will want to return the child to his parents. In work training programs for women whose children require day care, the completion of training sessions occurs on a staggered basis and the staff cannot predict how soon a trainee will get a job. In some programs the length of time that child care can be purchased is limited, for example, the Work Incentive Program (WIN) is limited to a period of 90 days.

From a public agency point of view, it is desirable to have family day care openings available whenever and wherever a need exists. When the public agency has spent time identifying, recruiting and training a family day care provider, there is a tendency to want her to serve exclusively children referred by that agency. From the operator's point of view, this is not always desirable. It can mean that she will experience long periods of time when she does not have full enrollment. Thus, the operator does not earn the amount of money she could be earning, while at the same time there may be working parents in the community who wish to buy her service.

Some people feel that public agencies should define more clearly the autonomy that remains with the operator so that she is free to recruit children on her own. Other people feel that because the needs of public agencies are often acute (e.g., child abuse cases), the family day care mother should see herself as a social service professional who has to make some personal sacrifices for the good of the children. The public agencies are also credited with being sources of free recruitment, information, equipment, and training—all of which are considered to be positive trade-offs for the times the family day care operator is left under-enrolled. In what seems like an extension of this logic, one

family day care association made a request to state government to receive the same fringe benefits as other state workers including sick leave and vacation pay. However, this was turned down because the operators are self-employed and not employees of the state.

ROLE OF FAMILY DAY CARE IN PROTECTIVE SERVICE CASES

Several states are increasing their use of family day care in an effort to prevent child abuse or neglect--or to help children in foster care. In prevention efforts, the purpose is usually to remove the child from the home for part of the day while offering counseling and other support services to the over-stressed parents. In foster care, even though the child has already been removed from his natural parents and placed in a healthy foster parent setting, family day care is sometimes provided to secure additional socialization experiences for the child. In either circumstance, it is important that the family day care mother be included in the overall planning and that communications take place between the state child welfare worker and the family day care provider.

There is the potential danger that the family day care operator will be considered merely a custodian rather than a part of the intervention team. The operator's daily contact with the child and family should be an important source of information to a child protective worker in assessing progress and problems. However, there is also a need for the child protection agency to share information with the operator about the family or the child protective process. For example, one participant was confronted by a mother who did not have legal custody of her child, who requested to take her child home. In another case, a mother whose child had been removed was deliberately not told the name of the family day home in which her child was placed. However, she attempted to locate

the home by asking her child questions and by inquiring in the neighborhood. This placed a strain on the family day care operator who knew this was happening but did not know what to do if a confrontation should take place. More open communications all around would have aided both of these situations. Obviously, using family day care for child protection activities is more complex than the average working family situation. It requires a family day care mother who is especially interested, who can help children and their families under stress, and who is prepared for the special problems that may arise. Considerably more needs to be done, perhaps through family day care associations, to acquaint family day care mothers and child protective workers with these considerations.

TRANSPORTATION

Another item of concern to some family day care associations is the transportation of children to and from the day care home. Some states authorize family day care mothers to use their own automobiles to pick up children. Where this occurs, the operator is usually reimbursed at a higher rate than for the children she does not transport. Some families require help in transporting the child, and the operator ought to be paid extra for the service. But on the other hand, it has meant longer working hours for the operator, complicated scheduling to be sure staff/child ratios are met, considerably higher auto insurance rates in some cases, and some disagreements between provider and parents over where to pick up or leave the child. Public agencies who wish to assign the transportation chore to a family day care provider should investigate these issues carefully before making a decision.

FAMILY DAY CARE ASSOCIATIONS - PROMOTING THEIR GROWTH

Organizing and maintaining an association has proved time-consuming but rewarding. Of the associations represented, most had been established within the last three years. There were several common experiences and concerns that have emerged from this organizing process.

SUPPORT GROUPS

It is important to recognize that most of the associations have been supported in their early development by a sponsor group and most continue to lean on sponsor group help. A sponsor group is usually a single agency or group of professional or civic-minded people who are concerned with the quality of family day care in a given community. In one community, the county level licensing agency has long been active in promoting family day care. The agency operates a referral service, provides training opportunities, maintains a toy lending library, and makes art supplies available at cost. An outgrowth of these many contacts among caregivers was the desire to form an association to share in the management of these services and to take on additional projects, such as securing group insurance and speaking out on income tax reforms.

In another state, an area planning agency took responsibility for an overall child development plan for a 13-county rural area. The agency determined that an influx of small factories necessitated more day care but since few buildings were available for day care centers, services would have to be based on improving and expanding family day care homes. Using demonstration funds, the agency created

a support project which recruits and trains operators and provides the loan of major equipment including fences, outdoor equipment, and fire extinguishers as well as the usual toys and books. Recognizing that the project would be time limited because of the demonstration money, the agency encouraged the operators to begin immediately to form an association to take over these tasks.

In a third community, the sponsor group has been a statewide consortium of black colleges. The consortium has an interest in children's food programs and feels that organizing family day care to participate in the USDA Child Care Food Program will be an important contribution.

In another state where three associations exist, providers themselves have been the impetus for forming associations. Even there the licensing agency has been active providing training and consultation opportunities which have put isolated caregivers in regular touch with each other.

In one community in this state, a unique sponsor group called the Family Day Home Support System Committee was formed in 1976. It consisted of representatives of various agencies and professional groups interested in family day care, including the state office for child development, state licensing and children's services agencies, the council of community services, a local college, a local day care center, the city health department, church groups, and the Association for the Education of Young Children. In its original design, it planned to provide consultation and training and to serve as the corporation to sponsor the USDA food program and group insurance opportunities for family day care operators. However, the interest of these professionals quickly sparked the providers to develop their own association to perform some of these tasks. Now the Family

Day Home Support System Committee offers training and technical help to the association and to other licensed providers and encourages non-licensed caregivers to seek licensing as a first step in becoming eligible for their help. This coalition approach to helping family day care is quite promising. In one document from this association, there is a list of 16 ways in which the Support System Committee has been helpful to the association. These range from making copying equipment and postage available and providing puppets to assisting in definition of the goals of the association.

FUND RAISING

Even with the support of a sponsor group, leaders of associations recognize that it takes energy and a delicate balance of circumstances to maintain their organizations. Almost all of the groups devote time to fund raising in order to support their newsletters and training events. Some of the fund raising has been quite imaginative and has served to publicize the association at the same time. "We Care for Children as a Profession," is a slogan printed on T-shirts sold as a fund-raising project by the Pinellas County Caregivers Association. At Christmas time, this same group worked in the toy department of a local store advising parents on the advantages and disadvantages of various toys. For this they received a donation of $100. Another association conducted a carnival with a variety of booths; different providers collected and sold things such as plants, handwork, baked goods, etc. Local stores were persuaded to donate merchandise which was used as prizes. This is a change of attitude for the merchants. Previously they looked on family day care as a private, profit-making business. Now they recognize that through the nonprofit association, both families and caregivers are benefiting and that as merchants they can make tax deductible contributions.

MEMBERSHIP

Recruiting and maintaining membership is another concern of most associations. In one county, there are 500 licensed family homes but only 75 have joined the association so far. Many of these members joined because of the insurance program. Now that the association has been dropped by its first insurance company, it will have to find an equal or better insurance program if it is to keep or expand its membership. Another association is aware that some people joined their association in hopes of improving the slow reimbursement practice of state government. Even though progress has been made, some operators have become discouraged and stopped accepting state referrals. It remains to be seen whether these operators will continue to seek membership in the association.

THE FUTURE

Despite these limitations, the associations represented are looking forward to future growth and further activities. Several associations anticipate taking greater responsibility for functions currently handled by their sponsor organizations. Maintaining toy lending libraries and information and referral services were most often mentioned in this regard. Others anticipated providing additional services including serving as a USDA sponsor, organizing group discount purchasing, and in one case establishing a "clothes closet" to provide free clothing for the low-income children they serve. Some of the associations feel that they will need a full-or part-time staff person in the near future. The USDA Child Care Food Program may be the base for such staffing since it requires a centralized person to manage and account for the feeding activities. Other possible sources of staffing may be the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act or the VISTA program.

There was also a desire to make it possible for leaders of different associations and their members to meet with each other more regularly in the future. The group recognized that a National Family Day Care Conference, sponsored by the Day Care and Child Development Council of America, will be held in September, 1977.

It is the first national meeting devoted exclusively to this subject and is viewed as a major step forward in asserting the importance of family day care to the public and the profession. Yet, participants also felt that meetings either within a state or among two or three states would be helpful. Meetings at the state or regional level would cut down on expenses and time away from the job but would continue to allow the valuable exchange of ideas and pooling of experience, which is beginning to happen through such meetings as the National Conference and the SREB meeting.

APPENDIX

Name: Family Day Care Home Providers of Alabama, Inc.

Location: Birmingham and Jefferson County, Alabama (with potential for expansion into other areas)

Date Established: 1977

Number of Members: 44

Dues: None

Association Contact: Mrs. Dee Dee Richardson
906 Panorama Terrace
Birmingham, Alabama 35216
Phone: 205-822-8105

Sponsoring Organization: Alabama Center for Higher Education
Attention: Dr. Lige Richardson
1520 Eighth Avenue, North
Room 1520
Birmingham, Alabama 35203
Phone: 205-324-4626

Major Issues Addressed: USDA Child Care Food Program
Training

Name: Georgia Mountains Family Day Care Association

Location: Serves four counties in North Georgia with potential to serve 13

Date Established: 1976

Number of Members: 43

Dues: $12 per year

Association Contact: Ms. Joan Lovell
Brown Ridge Road
Gainesville, Georgia 30501
Phone: 404-532-0307

Sponsoring Organization: Georgia Mountain Area Planning and Development Council
Attention: Sue Corley
Box 1720
Gainesville, Georgia 30501
Phone: 404-536-3431

Major Issues Addressed: Insurance, Training,
Toy and Equipment Loan, USDA Child Care Food Program

Name: Pinellas County Caregivers Association

Location: Pinellas County, Florida (includes St. Petersburg and Clearwater)

Date Established: 1976

Number of Members: 75

Dues: $2.50 per year

Association Contact: Ms. Mary Ann Englert, President Phone: 813-546-0670
Pinellas County Caregivers Association
6053 Dunfries Street, North
St. Petersburg, Florida 33709

Sponsoring Organization: Pinellas County License Board for Children's Centers and Family Day Care Homes Phone: 813-521-1853
4140- 49th Street, North
St. Petersburg, Florida 33709

Major Issues Addressed: Insurance, Training,
Toy and Equipment Loans

Name: Association of Family Day Care Homes of Knoxville

Location: Knoxville and Knox County, Tennessee

Date Established: 1972

Number of Members: 68 (approximately 25 family homes and 43 family group homes)

Dues: $10 per year

Association Contacts: Ms. Mary Williams, Past President Phone: 615-522-4895
Association of Family Day Care Homes of Knoxville
2815 Wimpole Avenue
Knoxville, Tennessee 37914

Ms. Helen Wimbley, President Phone: 615-689-2144
Association of Family Day Care Homes of Knoxville
4916 Oakbrook Court
Knoxville, Tennessee 37918

Sponsoring Organization: None (some support from the State Licensing Agency)

Major Issues Addressed: State Reimbursement Policies
Fringe Benefits
Training

Name: Child Care Providers of Shelby County

Location: Memphis, Tennessee

Date Established: 1975

Number of Members: 105 (family day care homes plus five day care centers)

Dues: $20 per year

Association Contact: Ms. La Frances Reynolds
4248 Beacon Hill
Memphis, Tennessee 38127
Phone: 901-353-1303

Sponsoring Organization: None (some support from the State Licensing Agency)

Major Issues Addressed:
State Reimbursement Policies
Information and Referral Service
USDA Child Care Food Program
Training
City Zoning Requirements

Name: Association of Day Care Home Providers, Inc.

Location: Nashville, Tennessee

Date Established: 1976

Number of Members: 38 (includes family day homes, family group homes and one center)

Dues: $10 per year

Association Contact: Ms. Judy Craddock, President
Association of Day Care Home Providers, Inc.
1121 Glenwood Avenue
Nashville, Tennessee 37204
Phone: 615-269-9358

Sponsoring Organization: Family Day Home Support System Committee
% Association of Day Care Home Providers, Inc.
Tulip Street Methodist Church
6th and Russell
East Nashville, Tennessee 37206

Major Issues Addressed:
State Reimbursement Policies
USDA Child Care Food Program
Training
Toy Lending Library
Insurance